

## PO 245 PM: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Spring 2008

Prof. Farbod  
(O) 861-1570

Room Z102, Zinzendorf  
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Office Hrs: T & R: 11-12 AM  
OR by appointment

The students will learn to examine critically a number of issues and themes pertaining to the Middle East. Selected topics include but are not limited to: a critique of prevalent Western ethnocentric views of the Middle East; examination of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, politics in pre- and post-revolutionary Iran, in pre- and post-invasion Iraq and Afghanistan, an examination of religious fundamentalisms in the region, resource politics, in particular that of oil, the U.S. foreign policy, including the “war on terror,” and finally the prospects for peace, democracy, and prosperity in the region. The students will benefit from a less detailed look at other nations of the region such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The course combines a focus on significant regional themes with a more detailed look at critical countries such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The class will also benefit from viewing a number of critical documentaries dealing with some of the more controversial aspects of life and politics in the region that are often shunned by the mainstream media.

### Required Books:

Keshavarz: **Jasmine and Stars**; Bennis: **Ending the Iraq War: A Primer**; Wright: **Dreams and Shadows**; Kovel: **Overcoming Zionism**; Kolhatkar: **Bleeding Afghanistan**

### Course Requirements:

- a. **Class Participation (CP):** (10%)
  - 1) Informed and consistent C.P. will make a difference in your grade. So keep up with the **readings** and the **news** from the region.
  - 2) **Attendance Policy:** After the introductory session, the first two **unexcused absences** will reduce the C.P. grade by 2 points each; the third will result in the loss of the participation grade altogether. Beyond that the student needs to schedule a meeting with me to discuss the status of the course. In cases of illness and emergency please notify me in advance. A note from a health professional is required.
- b. **Quizzes:** (30%)

There will be a total of **FIVE** quizzes administered at the **beginning** of the designated class sessions; There shall be **NO make-ups** regarding quizzes.
- c. **Research Paper:** (20%)

You should have a research topic in mind by mid-October. Please hand in a typed introductory paragraph by **the last class session in October** to indicate 1) your topic, 2) a significant question, 3) why you think the latter is important, and 4) the sources you will consult in your research. Your research must consult sources **outside** of those assigned in class. You may choose contemporary or historical topics so long as they can be shown to enhance our understanding of the region’s politics. The paper should comprise 6-8 typed pages. Due date: Two weeks before our last class meeting.
- d. **Final Exam:** (30%): The Final Exam is cumulative. Dates to be announced.
- e. **Debate:** (10%)

Students will be organized in groups for the purpose of debating significant issues arising from the various topics in the course. The details will be discussed in class.

<b>Evaluation* :</b>	Class Participation	10%
	Quizzes (5)	30%
	Debate	10%
	Term Paper	20%
	Final Exam	30%

**Class Readings** will be assigned on a class-by-class basis.

**Academic Honesty Policy:** In cases of cheating or plagiarizing in any way, I will follow the appropriate procedures as they appear in the College Student Handbook.

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\* It is within my purview to apply qualitative judgment in the determination of any and all grades.